The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

APRIL 1949

God Waits With Hope
By FRANCIS B. SAYRE

Journey to Jerusalem
By RAYMOND E. BALCOMB

Christ in Gethsemane
By BEN MORRIS RIDPATH

Easter, the Opening of Closed Doors
By CHRISTOPHER T. GARRIOTT

Eternal Life Now
By H. RICHARD RASMUSSON

Why Men Crack Up
By CHARLES MERRILL SMITH

The Local Church Paper
By GARY BOUSMAN

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Charles Clayton Morrison, *Editor*

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In the May Pulpit

Next month's issue of the Pulpit will feature a Mothers' Day sermon by AARON N. MECKEL. This sermon takes as its pattern for the ideal mother the person of Deborah, who was a "mother in Israel." REV. MECKEL is minister of the First Congregational Church, St. Petersburg, Fla.

Three other sermons of exceptional merit have also been selected. The first is by HAROLD W. RUOPP of Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church, Minneapolis, Minn., and is entitled, "Unfinished Business." This sermon which might well serve as a thought-starter for Memorial Day deals with the task that confronts us in the aftermath of war. Then there is one by RICHARD PAUL FREED, who ministers at the College Hill Presbyterian Church, Easton, Pa., on "God and Our Calling." Dr. Freed analyzes the experience of Moses who was called by God to serve his generation. Then, the lesson he derives he effectively applies to us in our situation today. Finally, there will be an excellent sermon on stewardship by CHARLES LEONARD COPENHAUER of Glen Ridge Congregational Church, Glen Ridge, N.J. The author of this sermon deals in a very realistic way with the Christian's use of his money and the responsibility he acquires with it.

In the Preacher Problems department there will be an article on "The Pastor and the Children" by JULIUS FISCHBACH, minister of the First Baptist Church, Lansing, Michigan. Dr. Fischbach is no stranger to Pulpit readers as he has contributed many delightful children's sermons in past issues.

Don't miss your May Pulpit!

WHO'S WHO IN THIS ISSUE

FRANCIS B. SAYRE was a member of the United States Delegation to the third General Assembly of the United Nations. At present, he represents this country on the trusteeship council. The sermon printed in this issue was delivered before the Chicago Sunday Evening Club, Feb. 6, 1949.

REV. RAYMOND E. BALCOMB has ministered at the Methodist Church of Holbrook, Mass., since 1945. He graduated from Boston University School of Theology in 1947 and is at present a resident fellow in that institution while working toward the Ph.D. degree.

A graduate of the University of Minnesota, REV. BEN MORRIS RIDPATH also attended Eden Seminary, Webster Groves, Mo. In twenty years he has served three Methodist churches in that state. At present he is minister of First Methodist Church, Joplin, where he has been since 1939.

REV. CHRISTOPHER T. GARRIOTT is pastor of St. Paul Community Church, Homewood, Illinois. A graduate of James Millikin University, Decatur, Ill., and of Chicago Theological Seminary, he is in his fifth year at his present post.

A graduate of McCormick Theological Seminary, REV. H. RICHARD RASMUSSON is minister of the University Church (Presbyterian) in West Lafayette, Ind. Former pastorates include the Presbyterian Church at Carlinville, Ill., and Clegg Chapel, Blackburn University.

REV. CHARLES MERRILL SMITH entered the ministry after experience as a newspaper reporter and editor. A graduate of Garrett Biblical Institute, he served for several years in the Rock River Conference of the Methodist Church before being called to The Wesley Foundation of Purdue University where he is minister to students.

REV. GARY BOUSMAN has been minister of Plymouth Church (Congregational) in Buffalo, N.Y. for one year. Prior to his present post he served churches in Crystal City, Mich., and Milwaukee, Wis., and from 1941 to 1945 he was a chaplain, U.S. Army.

REV. ROLAND E. TURNBULL is minister of First Baptist Church, Alton, Ill. . . . REV. LEWIS H. DAVIS is pastor of Prospect Methodist Church, Bristol, Conn. . . . REV. MILLARD M. GIFFORD is minister of the First Reformed Church, Passaic, N.J. . . . REV. C. LAWRENCE BROWN is pastor of the Morisania Presbyterian Church, New York City.

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THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

IT WAS high time that the appointed representatives of Protestant churches should meet again to find a common mind with respect to the present world situation and to make its findings articulate in a public statement. Twice before—at Delaware, Ohio, in 1942, and at Cleveland in 1945—notable conferences were held. I cannot discuss here the conclusions reached by the second Cleveland conference. But I wish to express a personal feeling as to the inadequacy of the Cleveland method of arriving at a consensus of the Christian mind on the grave questions with which the conference set itself to deal. The preparation was sadly insufficient for such important business. In the section on Soviet-American relations, for example, a document had been drafted as a kind of blueprint, and it was assumed that with some hastily improvised changes from the floor, this document would represent the mind of the conference. There was not time enough even to suggest an alternative approach. Moreover, one felt that the conference program was weighted with one-sided opinion. The presence of highly respected leaders whose public commitments were all on that side, made it seem fruitless and even presumptuous, in so short a time, to bring in other points of view. However, the conference was able to extricate itself from the spell of an exceedingly competent and admirable presentation of the Atlantic Pact by a representative of the state department and to withhold its commendation of that military alliance. Our churches ought not to be content with *ex parte* pronouncements formulated in advance, considered under the pressure of only four days of "deliberation" and whipped into shape by an editing committee working nearly all night to meet the deadline of next morning's session. The Federal Council should undertake for Protestantism the finding of a more adequate procedure.

Cleveland Conference Number II

The Book of the Month

THE COMMON VENTURES OF LIFE, *by Elton Trueblood. Harper. $1.00.*

IN THIS little volume Dr. Trueblood has taken four ventures of the common life—marriage, birth, work and death—and lifted them above the secular and the sordid into the sphere of the spiritual and the sacramental. This badly needs to be done for our generation which has allowed the elemental experiences of life to be degraded by two false interpretations: one scientific, the other secular. Science has led many to think that to understand anything it must be explained in terms of physical process. This Dr. Trueblood says really falsifies science. Secularism has largely come from religion itself—a false religion which has tried to attain spirituality by relegating the bodily and material activities and experiences of life to a nonspiritual level. For example, the author affirms, and rightly, that the marriage state is a higher level of spirituality than celibacy. He discusses each of the four ventures which I have named in a broad context. His interpretation of their profoundly spiritual or sacramental character is never abstract. He deals with them in terms of all the practicalities involved. This book is more important for ministers than any work on homiletics you have in your study. I can only give you a taste of it.

A Thought for the Month

PROTESTANTS are becoming conscious of their Protestantism. This is a new state of mind. Since the early years of the Reformation, when the Protestant movement began to divide and subdivide into sectarian churches, the denomination has held the central place in the allegiance of Protestant Christians. Correspondingly, the consciousness of being Protestant fell far into the background. Today the claims of sectarian distinctiveness and finality are dissolving into the fundamental elements of Protestantism, and a new consciousness of a common destiny is being born. There are various explanations of this development. One is the growing awareness that our denominational approach to modern society meets with unmistakable coldness. Another is that powerful competitors of Protestantism have emerged for which our divided churches are no match: our secularized education, preoccupation of the modern mind with science, the debasing of modern mentality by commercialized entertainment, to mention no others. And there is the Roman Catholic Church which has entrenched itself at the centers of power in the nation where it practically controls political and social opinion and policy in all matters affecting its interest. These forces, we might say, are *driving* Protestants together. But there are other forces that are *pulling* them together: a deepening acquaintance across denominational lines, the Christendom-wide ecumenical movement, and, more than all, a profound awakening to the fact that for the church to live in sectarian division is sin. As the consciousness of being Protestant first, and denominationalists second, comes really alive, the promise of the Reformation may be fulfilled in a new Protestantism that will no longer call itself Protestant, but "The Ecumenical Church of Christ."

Protestantism Coming Alive

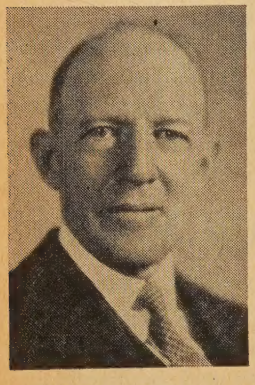
Charles Clayton Morrison

God Waits with Hope

By FRANCIS B. SAYRE

Where there is no vision the people perish. Proverbs 18:29

FOR three months last autumn in Paris we sat through the United Nations General Assembly, wrestling with problem after problem, listening to debates that seemed at times interminable, frustrated and exasperated by the tactics and vituperative speeches of certain delegates who were manifestly bent on wrecking all constructive programs for peace. As I listened, as I pondered on our present tortured world, I kept wondering, as you have doubtless been wondering many times yourselves, how does Christianity fit into the picture of present world problems?



Is Christianity only an idealistic escape from the terrifying problems and suffering and hard realities of present existence? Or is it rather an effective means of fortifying and strengthening our spirits for sterner fighting through the realization that so long as we keep our souls intact from evil, outward circumstance is powerless to harm us? You remember the gallant words with which Socrates concluded his *Apologia* after his judges had condemned him to death: "Wherefore, Oh Judges, . . . know of a certainty that no evil can happen to a good man either in life or after death."

THE GREATEST REALIST OF ALL TIME

Or can it be that Christianity is still something else, —that it constitutes a way of life for here and now, a great illuminating light to give direction and guidance in meeting the baffling personal and national and international problems which keep pressing in upon us from day to day? Was Christ primarily a gallant idealist and a brave dreamer, or was he, if only we had the wit and the good sense to understand him, one of the greatest realists of all time? Is Christianity, after all, not a way of escape, not a beacon light beckoning from another world, but a revelation of the only way of life in this work-a-day world of ours which can ever satisfy the deep insistent longings of the human heart and on which alone consequently an enduring human society can be built?

Questions like these kept running through my brain in those darkening November days in Paris, as we sat struggling with problems which bid fair to make or break Western civilization.

The experience at Paris brought out in high relief the tremendous struggle in which all of us are now engaged to save our Western civilization. In spite of its grave faults and its shortcomings, Western civilization, as a result of centuries of struggle and sacrifice, has come to be built upon a belief in human dignity as one of the most precious things in life. We are struggling to uphold human liberty, the rights of small nations, the rule of law and of right and of conscience, as opposed to might. We cannot allow that civilization to go undefended. We cannot allow it to be wrecked by methods of terrorism and ruthless violation of fundamental human rights.

WAR IS NOT THE ONLY WAY

It does not follow, however, that war is the only, or necessarily the best, means of protecting our civilization. The Soviet Union has herself discovered that there are far more profitable ways to gain her political ends than by war. War is too often due to the bankruptcy of brains. Ideas cannot be downed by force. It may be true that the Russians can be stopped only by superior force; but it is not true that war is the way to stop the spread of communism. Communism battens on war.

The idea put forward by some that the solution for present-day world problems is to be found in discarding the United Nations and setting up in its place strongly armed regional groups is too simple to fit our highly complex Twentieth Century world. It smacks of obsolescent Nineteenth Century conceptions.

In the Nineteenth Century men lived in a different world. Modern electricity and airplanes and radios were unknown. Until 1858 it took more than a week to get news across the Atlantic Ocean. Out of such a world were naturally evolved theories of national sovereignty absolute in its nature, peace policies built upon a precarious balance of power between almost watertight separate political units, an Europe based upon a Triple Alliance pitted against a Triple Entente.

These policies may have suited the age in which they were developed. But today Nineteenth Century underlying conditions have been swept away. The basic conceptions built upon them must go, too, if Western civilization is to survive.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION NECESSARY

By reason of today's amazing network of international trade and travel and interchange of thought which has developed with modern technological advance, the civilized world has now become so closely intermeshed in all its parts, so inescapably interdependent, that without constant and uninterrupted international collaboration our Western civilization cannot continue to function,—cannot, indeed, continue to exist. Nations can no longer live separate, isolated existences, competing each for selfish, superior power over rivals.

In the light of present conditions, the saving of Western civilization and the building of stable peace requires a decisive shift from Nineteenth Century conceptions. We have reached an age when, whether we like it or

not, if our civilization is to survive, collaboration among peoples for the service of humanity must take the place of power politics for selfish national ends.

Take, for instance, the Marshall Plan. Was there ever an instance before in human history when a nation shipped across the seas without hope of financial compensation hundreds of millions of dollars worth of its machinery and its industrial goods and its iron and steel, to meet human need in alien lands? The Marshall Plan rests upon the hard-headed realization that in our Twentieth Century civilization no nation can live unto itself alone, that we all sink or swim together, that not even the wealthiest nation can prosper even materially if large populations are desperately hungry and in need in other parts of the world, that the wisest and most rewarding, if not the only safe, national policy today is a humanitarian policy.

Or again, I think of the "regional arrangements," authorized under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the so-called Western European Union. This is not a move toward an alliance for selfish power to impose its will through armed force on unwilling peoples. It is rather a cooperative movement by free peoples, through common effort and collaboration, to crash through much of the outlived political and economic separatism which once held them apart. It is an effort in the spirit of the Twentieth Century to give to peoples a freer and more spacious life and at the same time a higher degree of security under which to work. It is another move away from Nineteenth Century rampant, selfish nationalism in the direction of forward-looking Twentieth Century internationalism.

WE FACE GLOBAL PROBLEMS

Surely we are living in a world which has advanced far from the separate nationalisms of the Nineteenth Century. We are facing global problems and they will never be solved except by global solutions based fundamentally on humanitarian considerations. The nation which plays a lone hand for stakes of selfish power is bound to lose in the Twentieth Century world. The dice are heavily loaded gainst her.

In spite of the menacing storm clouds with their distorting shadows at present darkening Europe, the important fact is that given our modern Twentieth Century unified and closely interdependent world, these trends toward international humanitarianism are inevitable and if our civilization survives ultimately irresistible. The United States, dreaming of economic self-sufficiency, attempted a long-range policy of selfish isolation in the years between the two world wars. In spite of our matchless power and wealth the attempt ended in utter failure. The Iron Curtain is another attempt. It also will end in failure.

Since the Second World War a new world is emerging—a world built upon global concepts of international obligation. Call it humanitarianism—the service of humanity—or call it by the Christian name of brotherhood—this is the goal toward which our Twentieth Century world is moving and must move, if we are to survive. Those nations whose people work genuinely and unselfishly for the welfare of humanity will be and are the great nations of the earth. The world is emerging to a level where right must be reckoned with and can conceivably play a more potent part than bare might.

I have said enough to indicate the tremendous role which Christianity must in our Twentieth Century be playing in the world. Up to now Christian thought has been largely cast in terms of human personality and relationships between individuals. But in our changed Twentieth Century world, the need for a vital Christianity which bears upon international, as well as upon individual relationships is becoming more and more impressive.

Unless mankind can find the way to supplant Nineteenth Century selfish nationalism with a new Twentieth Century international collaboration for the service of humanity, our Western civilization cannot survive. Was there ever a more stirring challenge to the forces of Christianity?

A VIRILE CHRISTIANITY

May I go a step further? The new World Order which we dream about can never, so far as I can see, come into being except as it is built upon a virile Christianity.

The new World Order is not to be gained through merely negative action,—through suppression of international law-breakers, or through general disarmament. Even the end of war will not bring the millennium. The new World Order can be built only upon very positive achievements. We must establish heightened moral standards and gain for them universal acceptance among nations as among individuals. We must strengthen throughout the world respect for fundamental human rights. We must work out a carefully planned program for the economic development of the world's natural resources. We must achieve sound and healthy practices in the realm of international trade and commerce, based upon non-discrimination and lowered trade barriers. We must strengthen and support a closely-knit and effectively functioning international organization of the peace-loving nations of the world. All of these are necessary foundations, and each depends upon an immense amount of virile work and constructive thinking—upon clearing away the vast accumulated debris of Nineteenth Century conceptions based on bygone conditions and outlived philosophies. The rampant nationalism of the Nineteenth Century must give way to Twentieth Century broad humanitarianism—a genuine concern for the individual welfare of men and women all over the world—if we and our civilization are to survive.

MANY TYPES NEEDED

The building of foundations such as these depends upon work on many fronts by many types of men,—scientists, economists, diplomatists, statesmen and a host of others. Such work is vitally necessary for survival. Many consecrated men are at this task, and to them we owe an immeasurable debt. But underlying all this is a still deeper need,—a common sense of direction in the minds of the workers such as only a common

spiritual objective can give. That means a sense of the reality of God. Without a common sense of direction the work of some will cancel the work of others and all must end in futility.

The bedrock realities of the present world situation force us to a flaming conclusion. Scientists and technicians cannot save us. Their work, necessary as it is, has resulted in intensifying the deadliness of war. Economists cannot save us. Their work in organizing and making possible increased production in the world has only served to make war more gigantic and world-wide and hence to intensify its consequent disruption and suffering. Statesmen and diplomatists cannot save us. They can often reconcile differences of viewpoint and sometimes work out formulas which prevent actual conflict; but if peoples have no common sense of ultimate values their efforts must prove futile. Unless the leaders themselves in their various spheres of work have a common sense of spiritual direction, catastrophe must result. And unless the great rank and file of the peoples of the world have common spiritual values upon which the leaders can build, again catastrophe must result. Only a sense of the reality of God which gives to men and women common spiritual values and a common sense of direction can save. And the one force which can achieve this is a virile and conquering Christianity.

By Christianity I do not mean sectarian doctrine. I do not mean ecclesiasticism or narrow theological dogmas. I mean the vivid, yeasty fundamentals taught by Jesus Christ.

Nations are not mystical entities. Nations are people. A changed world means changed people. And the only humanly possible way to change people is through some power outside of themselves. The inexorable moral laws of the universe bear with exactly the same force upon nations as upon men.

CHRISTIANITY—AN INTERNATIONAL SOLVENT

Have we any right to think of Christianity in terms of an international solvent? As one watches the United Nations at work he cannot fail to be impressed by the striking contrasts of race and color and creed. Hindus and Mohammedans and Buddhists and atheists untouched by any religion work shoulder to shoulder with Greek Catholics and Roman Catholics and Protestants and Jews. Amid such a welter of conflicting faiths is it reasonable to hope ever to achieve common moral standards throughout the world?

Emphatically, yes. Fundamental goodness and evil in terms of human behavior are essentially the same the world over. Every religion at its best alike teaches the ideal of justice, of good faith, of human charity.

But Christianity goes beyond all this. Its teaching of the fatherhood of God and the consequent brotherhood of man,—its unyielding emphasis upon the breakdown of every racial and national and social barrier which separates man from man—gives it a universality of outlook which makes it unique in its world-embracing appeal. Christianity transcends time and space. The great timeless principles taught by Christ have a matchless appeal to the oppressed and the suffering everywhere and a unifying power possessed by no other faith.

But if Christianity is to win its way across the world it must be loosed from local prejudices. It must be too broad and windfree to be tagged with any race or color.

Would that we could see young Americans joining in a great crusade for the spread of a salty and genuine Christianity throughout the world with the same fervor and the same devotion with which Russian youth are today actively spreading the cult of communism! History has shown again and again that Christianity, if it be the genuine essence, is a conquering force, supreme and irresistible. Americans, like others, have at their hand, if only they possess the faith and the courage to put it into practical play in their own country and in the world, a spiritual force of matchless potency to solve and to heal.

THE REAL CAUSE IS SPIRITUAL

The real causes of our present world disorder go deep. They are spiritual rather than political. Therefore the genuine solution, if it is to be effective, cannot be other than a spiritual one.

There is no simple answer. The disorder is too profound. The real cure is for the people of Christian nations to recapture their faith in the limitless and matchless power of the Christian fundamentals as taught by Jesus Christ. Such a statement sounds like mere cant. It is not. It is the sober conclusion of a vast multitude, who in all sincerity have struggled in different fields to find the answer and who have become convinced that there is no other.

Human greed and selfishness and unconcern for God's moral law are on the way to wreck the civilization we know—*unless* men and women all over the world can be brought to Christ's way of life and be won over—truly—to his teachings.

The ultimate part which America will play in the destiny of our civilization depends not on a handful of men in Washington. It depends upon the aspirations and the deep hopes of the great rank and file of individual men and women,—in the home, in the office, at the factory and on the farm.

We stand today at the parting of the ways. On the one hand, it is entirely possible that the present "cold war" is only a second brief interlude in a fifty- or hundred-years war which began in 1914 and which will usher in a new Dark Ages of savagery until in the distant future some new young civilization will evolve. Not only is this possible. It is likely, if we Christians remain indifferent or apathetic. On the other hand, if we have the will to do so, there is still time to gather our forces and make of our civilization the instrument of unprecedented and shining progress.

That will require the united effort of a great people, revitalized by a surging faith.

It is kindling faith which produces the creative periods in a people's history. So it is with the world today. The time is big with opportunity. Destiny is in the making. The issues call for men of vision and courage and faith.

God waits with hope.

Journey to Jerusalem

By RAYMOND E. BALCOMB

WE all have before us the challenge of a journey to Jerusalem. Oh, not many of us will be privileged actually to visit that ancient city but in a real sense we all have a journey to make even as the Master did on that first Palm Sunday. He went down to assert his claim to messiahship, to dramatize his right to be heard and followed as God's chosen One. He arranged for his entry to be made in such a fashion that no loyal Jew, steeped in the Old Testament, could miss his meaning. When Jesus went down to Jerusalem from Galilee he was forcing the issue. He was taking a definite stand for his convictions.

We all have to do that, sooner or later. We all have to confront the enemy of our souls in his own stronghold if we are to overcome him. You have your problems, I have mine and the person sitting in front of you has his. Maybe it's physical, a thorn in the flesh that won't come out; maybe it's a domestic problem that casts a shadow athwart your happiness; maybe it's a habit that is a ball-and-chain to your spirit. Whatever it may be, we've all got to go down to Jerusalem to have it out with our worst selves.

THE RIGHT WAY

The first thing to note is that the journey to Jerusalem must be made in the right way. There were a number of possibilities open to Jesus. Had he wanted to he could have gone down to Jerusalem at the head of an eager army, for one word from him and a "thousand uneasy swords" would have flashed from their scabbards.

Again, he might have slipped quietly and unnoticed into the Holy City amongst the throngs of pilgrims coming for the Passover. He could have followed the teaching of one of his own parables and let the leaven of his spirit work quietly and well among the poor and disinherited pilgrims of Israel.

Or, he could have made a political deal with the "powers that were" and taken a nice little share for himself from the profits of the ancient festival in return for his silence.

But he did none of these. He made a deliberate and open attempt to win his opposition to his side by moral and spiritual means. And that's the only way you can ultimately find victory on *your* journey to Jerusalem. There are those, you know, who think that the only way an issue can be faced and forced is by physical strength. If children disobey, give them a sound thrashing. If a neighbor lets his dog into your yard, whip him; if Russia steps out of line conscript an army and drop an atom bomb. "The end," we are glibly assured, "justifies the means."

Not long ago a little brown man died who held to just the opposite. He said that the means were always more important that the end because an evil means cannot produce a good end, but a good means must, if there's a God in heaven, produce a good end. This man accomplished at the cost of one life, his own, what Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and all the rest of the fathers of our country did for the United States at the cost of a bloody revolution—he won independence for his country from the British Empire. When Ghandi went down to Jerusalem he was careful to go in the right way.

THE RIGHT PURPOSE

Not only must one go the right way, however, one must also go down to Jerusalem for the right purpose. A recent novelist says of one of his characters that "he had the rare capability of looking behind and beyond everything that came into his view." That is what we all must do if we're going down to Jerusalem.

Jesus did. He knew full well that not only means were important, but also the end. He did not choose to ride on a donkey to glorify himself, his purpose was to proclaim the Kingdom of God.

If you're contemplating a trip down to Jerusalem to assert yourself or to glory in conquest, you're missing the importance of this fact. You must go down for a purpose greater than yourself. Think dispassionately about our own country for a moment. In the crisis confronting us, what goal do we seek? Do we seek prestige and power for ourselves, or do we seek the prosperity and good of all men? Woe unto us if we think only of ourselves! In that jumble of lies, half-truths, and unashamed paganism from the pen of Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* one reads this: "The only question regarding any policy toward foreign nations is, Does it benefit our nation now or in the future? . . . Partisan, religious, humanitarian and all other points of view in general are completely beside the point." We know what that philosophy leads to. Are we, as a nation, serving a purpose greater than ourselves? Woe unto us if we are not! So also with every journey to Jerusalem—it must be made for the right purpose, for a cause that is greater than oneself. For our nation to go down to Moscow, for instance, to keep what we have for ourselves means certain and deserved disaster.

There is a third factor to be considered. Not only must one go in the right way and for the right cause, one must also go at the right time.

If you read your New Testament carefully, you know that Jesus retreated more than once. At the very outset of his ministry, when there was danger down in Judea and his cousin John the Baptist was about to be unjustly beheaded for challenging the morality of

Herod, Jesus "came into Galilee." He didn't stay down at Jerusalem then, because the time was not ripe for forcing the issue. And more than once he withdrew in order to avoid outright conflict. He didn't go down to Jerusalem until the time was right. That was the issue he settled finally in Gethsemane; he had to know if this were the time.

So many of us are just the opposite! We try to jump on our horses and ride off in all directions on the first impulse. We go into the forest ostensibly looking for bears but we use all our ammunition up on the squirrels. We are like the five virgins Jesus told about. There were ten awaiting the arrival of the groom-to-be that they might go in with him to his wedding. But five of them used up all the oil in their lamps before he came, and while they were gone to get more he came and went in with the five who had waited until the right time to burn their lamps.

That's one-half of the shield, the tendency to go off unprepared. The other is this: to hold eternally back, waiting for a better opportunity, is as surely disastrous as to go too soon. The Roman general Fabius is credited with saying: "Don't fight until the right moment arrives; but when the right moment arrives, fight."

What about that enemy of your soul? Have you been putting off confronting him? Do you put it off for tomorrow? If so, today is the time; don't delay another moment to set out for the capital of the enemy. To put it another way, have you been putting off your personal surrender to the spirit of Christ? Go down to battle with your old self! "Put off the old man, put on the new."

SEIZE THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITY

Are we as a nation putting off the weightier matters of justice and mercy among the nations of the earth? Then let's challenge communism in its own backyard with a demonstration of the justice, peace, and plenty which genuine democracy can produce and not the hypocrisy of oil-seeking, munitions-peddling, reaction-sustaining imperialism. Now is the time to go down to Jerusalem!

One of the famous Lowells of Boston, a clergyman, added to the family coat of arms the Latin motto: *occasionem cognosce*—recognize the occasion, seize your opportunity! And that's the duty of all who must make a journey to Jerusalem—be sure that we do it at the right time.

And now we come to an amazing fact about this Jerusalem journey of Jesus: even though it was made in the right way for the right purpose at the right time it resulted in a temporary defeat. Within five days Jesus was crucified. And, very likely, we will bear a cross on our journey to Jerusalem. We may have to lose a battle to win a war.

If the United States challenges the USSR on moral and spiritual grounds rather than on the physical, we are quite apt to be crucified, make no mistake of that.

At the height of his powers Sir Walter Scott suddenly discovered that the publishing firm with which he had been associated was insolvent. He faced a mountain of debt. He didn't have to go down to Jerusalem; quite legally he could have declared himself bankrupt. He would have lost all his property but at least his future earnings would have been his. A friend offered to put up the money to help him out. His servants were willing to forego their wages that he might pay the debt. It was even suggested that a public subscription be taken throughout Scotland to ease his situation. He rejected all the easy ways out. "My own right hand shall pay the debt" was the way he put it. Well, he failed in his race with time; he died before he had earned enough from his writings to pay off the debt. He suffered, even though he went down to Jerusalem in the right way for the right purpose at the right time.

FAILURES WHO PAVED THE WAY

So, too, with John Brown whose abortive attempt to free the slaves ended in his own execution. So, too, with the only one of the great adventurers who participated in the three great attempts to scale Mt. Everest. He was George Leigh Mallory, whose "marvelous climbing accomplishments and his flaming spirit made him the outstanding figure of every expedition. 'Why do you try to climb this mountain?' a friend asked. Mallory's answer consisted of four words: 'Because it is there.' " In his last and mightiest effort with Andrew Irvine his companion he was observed to be within 800 feet of the summit—far higher than any man has climbed before or since—but then the all-but eternal mist closed around the peak and they were lost to sight, and never returned. They were last seen by an observer a few thousand feet below—"two tiny specks against the sky, fighting upward." They had gone down to their Jerusalem only to be crucified.

But all of these, like Jesus' crucifixion, are but temporary defeats. They all lost a battle but they all won a war. Sir Walter Scott will be remembered for his courage and honesty as long as time lasts. Though John Brown's body lay amouldering in the grave his spirit was marching on to free the slaves. Someday, someway, men will scale Everest and they will do so on the backs of Mallory and Irvine. Jesus was crucified but could not be held by death—next week we will join millions in the triumphant affirmation "Christ the Lord is risen today," for there is a power in this universe that makes for righteousness, and that God can be no more than temporarily thwarted by the evil men and forces of this world. The final end of him who goes down to Jerusalem in the right way for the right purpose at the right time is ever the crown of life.

Shadow of the Cross?

"The shadow of the cross"! . . . What idle words!
Can light cast shadow? . . . Rather we—of clay—
Throw out those darkened forms! . . . Heedless as birds,
We rush, with vulgar speed, past Calvary Way.
O God, why do we still refuse to stay
A longer while within Thy Radiant Light?
Until, suffused, we help dispel the night!

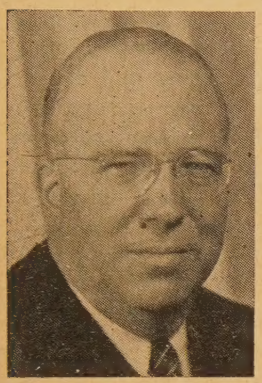
—Mary Dickerson Bangham.

Christ in Gethsemane

By BEN MORRIS RIDPATH

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemene, and saith unto his disciples: sit ye here while I go and pray yonder. Matt. 26:36.

DURING the later years of the nineteenth century, Johann Heinrich Hofmann, a German artist, painted with incredible skill and imagination the majestic figure of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. This wonderful canvas probably has been reproduced more than any other painting of a similar nature, and is one of the most beautiful, most widely known, and best loved paintings of all the world. The Garden of Gethsemane which is located on the Mount of Olives was possibly the private garden of a friend of Jesus, and tradition has it that he frequently entered it as a quiet place of prayer and meditation. It was a lonely and wistfully beautiful place then, and is now.



Today, the Garden is owned by the Franciscan Order of the Roman Catholic Church, having come under their control in 1681. In it there are eight giant olive trees ranging in circumference from 24 to 30 feet. One of these giant trees is known as the "tree of agony" and is asserted to be the tree under which Jesus suffered and prayed. Earlier in the night, the Master had left eight of the disciples at the entrance of the Garden, and had taken three of them with him into the deeper recesses where he left them and went ahead alone to face the greatest crisis of his life on earth.

SURRENDER IN GETHSEMANE

It is here the artist portrays him, kneeling, with outstretched hands clasped before him. His arms rest upon a barren rock. He looks intently toward the heavens from which a shaft of light is coming, the only light in the picture except that which the artist includes in the halo about the head of Christ. Jesus was totally alone, with a decision and a dedication that could be shared only with his Heavenly Father. Here he found weighing upon his heart a strain so great that human nature could not endure it.

He must have thought of the circumstances that led to his Gethsemane—the malice of wicked men, the treachery of Judas, the desertion of his friends, the denial by Simon Peter, the flabbiness of the character of Pontius Pilate, the wilful iniquity of those he came to redeem. In this terrifying crisis, he had no other resource but prayer. In this prayer we have the only record in the Gospels where he addressed God as "My Father." The Gospel record tells us that Jesus prayed three times in Gethsemane. The first time, he prayed: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me," and on the second and third return to the place of prayer he cried: "If this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done, not mine." This was the most majestic hour in the life of Christ. It was his shining hour, the hour when he said "Yes" to God! Here was complete and full surrender to the divine will. It was not weak resignation. It was militant assent to highest purpose, positive affirmation of trust and belief in the ultimate victory of the goodness and love of God at whatever cost.

HEAVEN IS SAYING 'YES' TO GOD

Here is a pointed lesson in theology for humanity. "What and where is heaven?" we ask. "What and where is hell?" Heaven is that condition in life where men say "yes" to God! Hell is that condition of the human heart when men say "no" to the divine will! Life is at its highest and best when men seek the will of God and acquiesce to it. Man's salvation is full and complete when, and only when, the human mind and will are caught up and brought into harmony with the current of divine purpose and will.

This is not an easy process for man. The conflict between the human heart with its self-centered desires and the divine will for the greatest good always brings an indescribable agony and restlessness until the complete surrender is made. As Stanley Jones has so poignantly put it: "whenever the sin of man meets the love of God, a cross is raised." Surrender to God's will is the highest pinnacle of spiritual achievement and the true test of real faith in the fatherly love of the divine mind and heart at the center of the universe. Bishop John Calvin Broomfield in a recent sermon told of his experience as a cabin boy on a fishing boat off the coast of Scotland. The little vessel was out on a rough sea in a night so black that the fishermen had to feel their way about the deck by clinging to the rail and rigging as they made their rounds from place to place on the boat. An old seaman was at the tiller, his presence visible only by the sparks lifted from the bowl of his pipe by the wild wind. Above the roar of the sea, he could be heard singing the words of an old hymn:

I know not what awaits me,
God kindly veils mine eyes;
And o'er each step of my onward way,
He makes new scenes arise.

So on I go, not knowing—
I would not if I might.
I would rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone by sight.

Where he may lead, I'll follow;
My trust in him repose.
And every hour in perfect peace,
I'll sing: "He knows—He knows!"

From Jesus in Gethsemane, we learn the lesson of prayer at its best. We have the right to pray and ask for what we will. Prayer is as natural to the human heart as air is natural to the lungs. But we learn here that the final objective of true prayer is to change the human will into submission to the divine will, that prayer which does not succeed in moderating our own wish, in changing the passionate desire into still submission, the anxious expectation into silent surrender is not true prayer. We learn also that prayer is most holy in which there is least of petition and desire, a waiting on God to discover and determine his will for us. In such holy prayer, petition and personal desire are often transformed into thanksgiving and trust. Clovis Chappell suggests in one of his sermons that hints are given us by Jesus which make it seem that a time is possible for us when spirituality will be so complete and acquiescence to the will of God so entire that petition shall be superseded by a serene trust in God's love. "In that day" we read from the words of Christ, "ye shall ask me nothing," and again: "I say not that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you." This idea is also suggested by Jesus when he said: "For your Heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him." Practically, then, we must pray in our own Gethsemanes as Jesus prayed in his. We must pray until prayer makes us forget our own wish, only to leave it or merge it with God's will.

The divine wisdom has given us prayer, not as a means by which we obtain the good things of this world, but as a means whereby we do without them; not as a means whereby we escape evil, but as an instrument of power with which we meet it. "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven." This was God's answer to Christ's prayer in Gethsemane. The divine messenger from the heavenly places brought new strength to him whose "sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." And so, in the expectation of impending darkness and danger, prayer in life's Gethsemane can win the victory. Not that we ward off the trials, difficulties and suffering of this world, but rather that in complete surrender to God's love and God's will we learn to say as Christ did in his Garden of Gethsemane: "Arise, let us go out and meet life head-on!" With God on our side, nothing can defeat us. This is the lesson of Gethsemane!

Easter, the Opening of Closed Doors

By CHRISTOPHER T. GARRIOTT

When . . . it was evening, on that day, . . . and when the doors were closed where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you. John 20:19.

EASTER is more than the discovery of an open tomb; it is also the opening of closed doors in the personal lives of men. How strange it seems that on the first Easter evening the disciples were gathered behind closed doors! Throughout that memorable day of Christian history reports came from various sources that Christ had risen from the dead. Mary Magdalene, Peter and John, and two disciples on the road to the village of Emmaus had declared the Lord alive. But as the dusk of evening settled over the ancient city of Jerusalem the disciples came, one by one, to a secret meeting place, and as each entered the dimly lit room the huge wooden door was barred from the inside. Easter evening, the end of the day that unborn generations were to celebrate with joyous music and animated art, found the intimate followers of Jesus behind closed doors.

According to the Gospel of John they were behind closed doors because they were afraid of the Jews. However, Peter was in that room, yet in a few weeks at Pentecost he was unafraid of Jew, Greek or barbarian. James was in that secret fellowship, and yet in a few months he was to declare the risen Christ on the streets and housetops of Jerusalem. John Mark, a mere youth, crouched in a corner of that room, fearful of each knock on the door, and yet in a few years the nervous hands of this young man were to give form to a Gospel that has lived for fifty generations.

AMID FEAR AND CONFUSION

It is true that the disciples feared the Jews because organized Judaism personified injustice, power, greed, bigotry and cruelty. These forces had crucified their Master, and were still in the saddle on the streets of Jerusalem. However they were also afraid of the world, its death, darkness, disease and disintegration. They were even afraid of themselves because they were uncertain, confused and heart-broken. Their dream of an enduring Kingdom had vanished on the mound of Golgotha, and their Messiah had breathed his last in the company of thieves. Shutters had dropped on their vistas of faith, and on the first Easter evening they huddled together behind closed doors.

When they were assembled in a closed room above the streets of Jerusalem they began to pray, and to exchange accounts of the strange happenings of the past week. Again in their memories live the joyous celebration of Palm Sunday, the solemn atmosphere of the Upper Room and the symbolism of the bread and wine,

the long hours in the garden, the hectic moments of the trial in Pilate's court, the stark tragedy of the cross, and also the mysterious open tomb.

In the midst of their discussion the huge door began to creak on its rusty hinges and gradually opened before them. They were ready to flee. But they beheld framed in that doorway their Lord, and he said unto them, "Peace be unto you." Every eye in that room was focused upon the doorway, and a voice spoke softly to them. It was the voice of the Lord! That presence in the open door caused their hearts to burn within them, and though they could not see distinctly because of the small oil lamp that fitfully lit the room they knew it was the Lord. He spoke to them of their responsibilities in the world, and breathed upon them his spirit. Again he said, "Peace be unto you," and he was gone into the night; but the door was open and the shutters of doubt were lifted from their eyes.

In a moment they rushed to the door, and Peter surveyed the window stairway, but no one was there. James looked upon the street but only a peddler pulled his cart across the cobblestones. They came together in the center of the room and prayed, but no man closed the door, even though they were conscious of a company of Roman soldiers patrolling the streets below. Christ had opened the doors of their personal lives that evening, and they were ready to preach the gospel on the streets of Jerusalem. He had unlocked doors for them that were yet to be opened as they carried the gospel to all nations.

CHRIST OPENS DOORS FOR US

We have our fears, misgivings, doubts and dilemmas about life, as did the disciples. We tend to take the truth of Christ's teaching behind closed doors instead of living the reality of the life he taught in the affairs of men. We sing on Easter morning, "Christ is risen!" but as the shadows of evening lengthen we bring this truth to a sheltered room and try to preserve it behind closed doors which are far removed from the affairs of men. What were the doors that Christ opened to the disciples, and what doors may he open for us?

In the first place, he opened the door of faith in the ultimate triumph of God over the cruel and barbaric nature of men. Although he had suffered and died upon the cross, his teachings and sacrificial love were not snuffed out by the destruction of men. In spite of war, death, disease and disintegration in the world Christ stood before his followers to declare, "Peace be unto you." He gave them a faith, a center, in the midst of a transitory world which appeared to be peopled with demons that possessed the souls of men.

Even in the desperation and fear of our own age Christ continues to open before us the door that will lead to reconciliation and peaceful relationships. Whenever we pass through the open door we walk not alone; we are not mere schemers, shrewd drivers of our own advantageous bargain, but messengers of the faith that God will triumph over the barbaric nature that prompts man to kill and hate.

The true Christian can never close himself behind the door of egoistic nationalism, for Christ bids him to assume responsibility in reconstructing the world in the designs of a God who will eventually triumph over the barbaric nature of man.

In the second place, Christ opened the door of a universal gospel for all men of earth. The first disciples were interested in themselves, in preserving their group and consequently they met behind closed doors. We in the churches sometimes become so concerned about preserving our groups that we forget about the universality of the Christian gospel. Christianity might have died behind those closed doors in the city of Jerusalem, and gone down in history as a perversion of Judaism. The Christian life is a precious treasure hidden in a field, but it belongs to all men. Even in our local communities it is easy to forget the great number of persons who have never heard the teachings of Christ. It is easy to keep Christianity behind closed doors in the midst of industrial and economic problems that threaten the foundations of Christian living.

WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY

The first disciples walked through the open door of that room in Jerusalem to preach the gospel of Christ to all men of all classes. We of the church of the twentieth century have the responsibility of actualizing the teachings of Jesus Christ in the emerging world order. This is an open door through which we must pass if we are to understand the full implications of the statement, "Christ is risen."

Finally, Christ opened the door to a new social order in which men might work together with God in discovering the truth, beauty and goodness of life. His disciples called it a Kingdom, and Christ was their King. Jesus had stood before the obdurate Pilate and insisted that he was searching for the true Kingdom of God on earth. Peter and John were to stand before the rulers of Jerusalem and talk of the Messiah of their Kingdom. When the disciples walked through this open door they gained a new spirit of power because they were no longer concerned about preserving themselves. They had, instead, become concerned about preserving the Kingdom of their Lord. They started with a kingdom of mustard-seed dimensions, but as they taught men of God's ultimate victory over the kingdoms of earth, of the universality of the teachings of Christ, and the broad dimensions of Christ's Kingdom, the movement gained in numbers as well as in the power of God in the hearts of the devoted disciples.

Yes, Christ opens before us a new door this Easter. We are called to share in rebuilding a social order upon his principles of love, cooperation and truth; an order wherein all men are free from want, despotism, the luxury of half-truth. Christ opens before you a door of brotherhood and you are called to leave the small, dimly lit room of racial prejudice, hatred, economic injustice and enter into a world seething with these tensions with a gospel of liberation for all races of men.

Easter is the opening of closed doors! It is not enough to say that the Lord is risen, and then retreat to our own silent meditation behind the closed doors of self which lead away from the confused street scenes of man. Before the open doors of our generation stands the

living presence of Christ saying: "Peace be unto you."

Whenever you move through the open doors of Christ in your generation you will stand in all places as the representatives of faith in the triumph of God over the barbaric nature of men, heralds of a universal gospel, adherents of the continuing Kingdom of Christ. Then shall you declare as you move through the opening doors: "Christ is risen, indeed!"

Eternal Life Now

By H. RICHARD RASMUSSON

He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. John 12:25.

NOWHERE in the Gospels can we find Jesus talking about immortality. Instead he talked about "eternal life." "He that loveth his life," he said, "loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." Immortality stresses primarily continuous existence, while eternal life means depth of life *in* existence. Immortality is merely a going on and on. Eternal life is life so rich and significant that it makes going on and on desirable. Immortality is postmortem; eternal life is now.

Talking, then, about eternal life, time and eternity, here and now, now and the future become organically one. We cannot prepare for eternity, for thinking in the terms of eternal life we are now *in* eternity. As Richard Jeffries wrote: "The question is not, 'Where will you spend eternity,' but 'Where are you spending it?'" If we hope to go on advancing, unfolding, growing, developing after death, we must be participating now in eternal life.

ETERNITY IS NOW

One practical result of such an emphasis on eternal life is that we must cease postponing it. We must focus our living, not on the future, but on the here and now. When the Scotchman was told: "Now is the time to go to heaven," he replied, "That is where I am living now." To quote Richard Jeffries again: "It is eternity now. I am in the midst of it. It is about me in the sunshine; I am in it as the butterfly floats in the sunladen air." Eternal life is all about us, waiting to be lived. It is a quality of life in the present, received from Christ and serving ends that his spirit would approve and bless.

But is it possible to miss this eternal life. Do you know the story of "Peer Gynt" in Ibsen's play by the same name? Peer's maxim of life was: "Peer, to thyself be enough." He followed this maxim through life and living for himself, lost himself: "He that loveth his life shall lose it." On Whitsun Eve we see Peer gathering onions in a forest. He begins to peel off layer after layer to find the core. Ibsen means for us to see in this Peer's effort to find his real self. And as layer after layer of the onion comes off, Peer exclaims: "Isn't the kernel soon coming to light? I'm blest if it is. To the innermost center . . . nothing . . .". Peer saw himself as he really was, an empty shell. And his fate therefore was to be boiled down again in the melting pot of the creation with others like him who had never lived for anything worth while, had never served anything beyond themselves.

It is only as we build heaven into us here, that we can know or have heaven hereafter. Eternal life isn't something we get after we are dead. Unless we find it here and take it with us when we die, we must know the terrible reality of death.

ETERNITY IS ATTRACTIVE

Another practical result of this emphasis on eternal life is that it makes it desirable. Immortality without eternal life, so far from being attractive, is terrifying. Merely to go on and on in a static existence, as in the traditional heaven, would be unendurable.

In Buddhism there is no recognition that life can be of such quality and richness, growth, purposefulness, that going on for the sake of growth is worthwhile. So in Buddhism life in terms of rebirth is something to be abhorred. Salvation becomes the cessation of consciousness in Nirvana. And this belief is to be gratefully accepted if there is only immortality—going on and on.

Jesus, however, added to immortality the idea of eternal life. He brought into life a new quality of experience and meaning, revealed new dimensions to every life, made going on a qualitative growth in richness and depth of being so that going on and on became worthwhile and greatly to be desired.

In a drama by Eugene O'Neill, a cynic says: "Immortality! an old superstition born of fear. Beyond death there is nothing. That, at least is a certainty, a certainty we should be thankful for. One life is boring enough, do not condemn us to another." Missing life's true quality of growth, service, dedication here who would want it to be perpetuated? On that level the cynic is correct. Missing eternal life here, immortality would be terrible.

But listen now to Wilfred Grenfell, one-time great Labrador doctor, who said: "I am very much in love with life. I want all I can get of it. I want more of it after the incident called death, if there is any to be had." He knew life's full dimension of glory, Christ

lived in him richly to help and serve the poor and needy, so he wanted life forever. For him "life piled on life were all too little."

ETERNITY IS INEVITABLE

The final issue of this emphasis on eternal life is to make it inevitable. Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost said of Jesus: "Whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." How could one, he is saying, who had lived so completely in the will of God, served so completely eternal truth and love, be holden by death? For one who had built into his soul the qualities of God, that quality of experience called "eternal life," could not be stopped by nailing his body to a cross.

If everything we participate in here and belong to here is transient, ephemeral, fugitive, writes Dr. Fosdick, then it is only reasonable to believe that at the end we will be like the chaff which the wind driveth away. But when we participate in goodness and truth and love, serve sacrificially the great purposes of the gospel, labor for justice among all classes of men, we partake inevitably of eternal life.

We are not preparing for eternity now, we are even now in eternity. And whatever takes place after the body dies, it will be for the participant in eternal life the continuance of that Christian joy and service begun here and now. "This *is* life eternal to know thee." In the words of John Masefield we seek:

> "A light that darkness cannot smirch, a peace
> That torment cannot break, a Life that Death
> Is powerless to kill, being life eternal."

A Pastoral Prayer

By C. LAWRENCE BROWN

O God, with whom none is great, none is low, but all are equal and near, we thank Thee that Thou dost own us, and claim us as Thy children.

Day by day, life's duties place upon us their obligations. The hours are filled with much serving, but on Thy day we own one right. We worship Thee. We bless Thee. We thank Thee for Thy goodness and Thy grace.

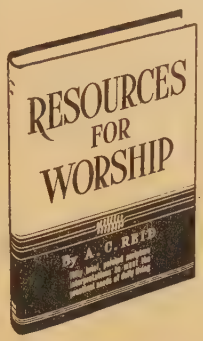
Thou findest us wherever we are. Thou knowest us whatever we do. Thou understandest us however we may feel lost and alone. Thou readest the heart correctly. Let Thy searching light fall upon our consciences and help us to see what Thou seest so clearly.

Let no sufferer believe that he suffers alone. Let no sinner think that he bears the consequences of his deeds alone. Let no neglected one decide that he is unwanted by Thee.

In a hostile world, we thank Thee for Thy peacemakers at work at home and across the seas—who seek to bring peace to bodies and hearts and homes. Increase our concern that we may be strong links in the chain of peacemakers, we pray Thee, O Lord.

In Jesus' name we come to Thee. Amen.

RESOURCES for WORSHIP



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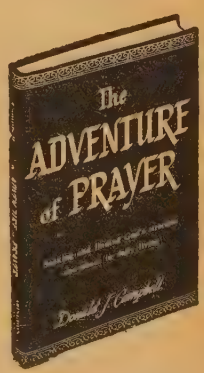

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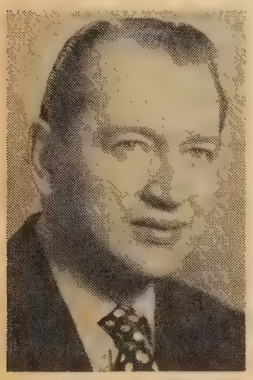
Why Men Crack Up

By CHARLES MERRILL SMITH

Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish . . . and he had a son, whose name was Saul, and . . . there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he. . . . I Samuel 9:1-2.

RECENTLY there appeared in the newspapers the story of a Brooklyn judge, vice-president of a bank, who had used his political office and his bank position to misappropriate 615 thousand dollars. When I read this story I could not help but question what possesses a man to let himself do such a thing. Obviously he had at one time demonstrated a capacity for responsibility and trust, for he had been given two important positions.



Yet this is not an un-common story. Almost every edition of the news brings the account of some prominent and respected citizen who has in some way been false to everything he has stood for and everything he considered at one time good and right.

Crack-up—moral crack-up—is an apt description of such stories. Yet these crack-ups do not occur suddenly. What we see is the dramatic denouncement of a process which has been going on a long time. Every community lives with the problem of disintegrating personalities, and all of us wonder, at one time or another, what seeps into a man's life that turns it downward to darkness and despair and moral defeat.

The twentieth century, of course, has no monopoly on this sort of thing. Perhaps the frantic pace at which we live and the multiplicity of temptations we face speed up the process. But the story is as old as the story of man.

AN OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLE

In the Old Testament we have an account which is a classic example of the disintegration of a personality—the story of Saul. The story begins by extolling the virtues of Saul. He came from a fine family, had the best home training, was humble, honest, brave, strong and handsome. His endowments are so obvious that Samuel recognized, at first sight of him, that here was "king material," and straightway annointed him the first king of Israel. So, at an early age, Saul was permitted to set his hand to great things.

He began his task in modesty and humility. He told Samuel that he did not feel "up to it"—rather a good qualification for a leader. And on coronation day he hid in embarrassment. Then, too, he began his task with a deep sense of mission in his heart and the light of high purpose in his eyes. Everybody thought it was a great day for Israel when Saul of the tribe of Benjamin was made king.

But somewhere along the way something happened. Saul won significant victories for his country. And it is indicated that he instituted several worthwhile domestic reforms. But another process was underway, doing its quiet, deadly work. Saul became increasingly susceptible to dangers of the spirit from which one would have thought him immune. He allowed himself to be seduced down fatal detours from his main purpose. And, contrasted with the author's description of Saul's high and hopeful beginning, we have the account of his quick, brutal ending—when, tortured in mind and body he impaled himself on his own sword. Let us probe, briefly, this morning, the cause of Saul's crack-up.

HE TRIFLED WITH GREAT THINGS

Saul's deterioration came about, I think, because he was a trifler—he trifled with the great things of life. Some things are sacred and must be treated so and Saul forgot this.

Take, for example, the sacred bond of friendship. Saul found a wonderful friend in David. David came to him when he sorely needed the soothing and encouraging influence which comes best from a real friend. This was a relationship which should have withstood the ravages of jealousy and personal competition.

But David rapidly became popular. And one day Saul heard a group of women singing a song that said, in effect, that Saul was a great fellow, but that David was ten times greater. And something snapped in Saul's heart. He saw his position threatened. I suppose he imagined, in that nightmarish moment, what things would be like if this song ever became "No. 1" on the Hebrew "hit parade." And in that moment David changed, in Saul's mind, from a friend into a challenger of his—Saul's—leadership.

Most of us know how personal jealousy can turn life suddenly sour. Everybody is a target for jealousy. It tortures the spirit and warps the perspective and sucks the joy out of living. And it is a dead-end street, for any victory jealousy wins is a defeat for the personality. Saul trifled with his friendship for David. He let jealousy ruin it. And this was the beginning of the ruin of Saul.

Then Saul trifled with love. You remember he had a fine son, Jonathan, who loved him and whom he loved. Yet, Saul, the story relates, condemned Jonathan to death for no better reason than that a throw of a pair of dice indicated that Jonathan had done wrong in the sight of God. It was only the good sense of the people that prevented the execution. Saul, by this placing of primitive superstition above filial love, demonstrated nothing so much as his own moral bankruptcy.

Saul also was guilty of trifling with his duty. In a battle with the Amalekites he had his orders from the prophet Samuel to destroy all the captured booty. But

Saul saw the fat sheep and cattle and it occurred to him that he might make a tidy sum on them, so he kept them. By this act, he placed personal gain above the execution of his duty. By compromising his duty he showed that greed had crept into his soul.

Saul also trifled with his mission. You remember how he started out in humility, subduing his personality to the great undertaking to which he had been called.

But here again he changed. Somewhere along the way his mission became secondary to his kingship. He became a "career man." His personal prestige was more important to him than the fate of Israel.

A good psychiatrist, I suppose, would have spotted his trouble in a minute. His life was increasingly organized about himself. How modern this diagnosis sounds and how likely this condition is to be the prelude to any moral crack-up. Fritz Kunkel, in his book *In Search of Maturity,* writes: "Disintegration results from egocentricity, and destroys human life just as the decay of living tissue ensues wherever a malignant tumor develops." Saul's vision of his mission became obscured by his preoccupation with himself and he failed both his mission and himself.

HE TRIFLED WITH RELIGION

And Saul trifled with his faith. At various times Saul demonstrated that he was favorably inclined toward religion. He was careful to observe the rituals of his own faith and was much disturbed when the people broke a taboo.

It is indicated too, that he was emotionally stirred by his faith. Early in the story is an account of his taking a brief sojourn with a band of "esoteric prophets." There is also a hint that he tried to bring good sense into the religious life of Israel by outlawing fortune tellers, spirit-mediums, and other religious fakers. But that God ever became a living reality to him is doubtful. Like many people today who are swept by the emotional surge of religion, Saul never comprehended the implications for living in his faith.

Walter Lippman once said that unless a man has his faith in his very bones he doesn't have a faith, and I am inclined to agree with him. Unless our faith dictates our goals, our purposes and our actions, it isn't really faith. Saul reversed this order. He let his desires dictate his faith. And near the end we see him in desperation turning for spiritual guidance to one of the very witches he had banished. He trifled with his faith—which is the same as saying that he had no faith.

In such a time as this, when "nothing sacred" is almost a postulate, the story of Saul graphically reminds us that there are some things in this life a man can't trifle with and keep his soul.

MORAL DISINTEGRATION

Not that trifling with the great things in life always ends in stark tragedy and dramatic action. More frequently it doesn't. Most of us are not privileged to play our lives on so large a stage as Saul, and our moral defeats therefore do not make so much of a splash. But moral disintegration goes on all about us, working its cancerous way into the spirit with never a hint to the

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world except perhaps the little, hard lines which gather almost imperceptibly about the mouth as we let life disillusion us; or the fading glow from the eye as we retreat from the front lines of idealism; or the bitter note which creeps unasked into the voice as we discover that every man has his price and that we had better look out for ourselves; or the stuffy arrogance which shrouds our personalities as our minds become accustomed to and comfortable with our favorite prejudices.

Many times this disintegration of the personality goes on for years in people we would think immune from it. They never kick over the traces in any dramatic and scandalous way like the Brooklyn judge. They go on living as they have always lived, doing the things they have always done, respected and admired. And the only retribution they know is the worst retribution of all—the torturing knowledge locked in their heart that they are a living lie.

A CONSTANT DANGER

They live in constant danger of the germ which starts life toward a moral crack-up, however dramatic or undramatic that crack-up may be. It can work away at the spiritual vitals without one's suspecting it. A wrong turning, a temptation yielded to, a standard lowered and the lowering rationalized. A rationalization is always an indictment of ourselves, if we only knew it.

Greek tragedy pictured helpless personality in the grip of fate and the protagonist ennobled the tragedy by his heroic reactions to his inevitable doom. But the Hebrew historian never hints that Saul was a victim of fate. The tragedy here lies in the tremendous fact that it might have turned out differently. The hell into which he descended was of his own making—and he needn't have ended up like that at all.

THE LOVE OF WRONG THINGS

Saul lost out because he began to love the wrong things and failed to check up on himself. And when he finally realized what had happened to him, the only thing he could see to do was to rip out his life with his own sword—and, horrible as it was, this was probably the most accurate and sincere judgment he had passed on himself since he ran away from his own coronation.

The lesson here, it seems to me, is clear. Find out early what the great things in life are, and don't trifle with them. Fortunately, the Christian gospel is quite definite and specific about these things. Learn to love the right things, and keep a constant check on yourself to see that you aren't slipping down the long, dark road of moral disintegration, heading for a crack-up.

How to Prevent Explosions

A sermon for children by Lewis H. Davis

HAVE you Juniors ever noticed the chains that hang from the rear end of gasoline trucks? Have you heard the little jingling noise made by the last few links of the chain as they bounce along the road?

Those chains are there for a very important reason. Years ago it was found that gasoline trucks on the road would catch fire and explode, without any apparent reason. Nobody had lit a match to look into the tank. The tanks, for no good reason, exploded.

So someone put his brain to work and decided that the rubber tires of the truck, rolling along the road, generated static electricity until the truck got charged with it. Then, when the charge was heavy enough, a spark jumped, set fire to the gasoline and caused the explosion. Someone's brain worked again and thought of hanging a chain from the truck frame to the ground so the static electricity could harmlessly run into the ground and not cause an explosion. The chain is a sort of lightening rod.

YOU MAKE ELECTRICITY TOO

Every Junior has done that little trick of rubbing his feet on the carpet, touching someone's nose with his finger, hearing the little crackle of a spark of static electricity, and hearing the other person say, "Ouch!" Rubbing your feet on the carpet had charged you with static electricity and when you got your finger near your friend's nose, the spark jumped from your finger to his nose. It's the same kind of spark that used to blow up gas trucks. Since the chain now harmlessly grounds the electricity, explosions are rare.

Now people, like gas trucks, sometimes get charged with a kind of static electricity and if there isn't found some way of getting rid of it harmlessly, there's likely to be an explosion. Some times things, as we say "rub us the wrong way. Your little brother or sister or playmate gets on your nerves and does things that pester you and make you mad inside. You tell yourself you're not going to let it get you and you say nothing, but all the while that charge of static electricity is building up in your mind, working toward an explosion. Then suddenly a spark jumps somewhere and you explode and say something or do something you're sorry about later—just like a gas truck exploding on the highway.

THE STATIC THAT BLOWS UP PEOPLE

Now Jesus didn't know anything about the kind of static electricity that sometimes blows up gas trucks, but he knew a great deal about the kind of static that blows up people. A great deal of what he had to say was concerned with how to keep that static under control.

You remember that time and time again he talked about the importance of forgiving those who had wronged you and about loving your enemies and about doing good to those who hate you. When he said this,

how wise he was! If you let resentment and hatred pile up inside you, you're getting ready for an explosion, a flare-up that will burn you as well as the other fellow. Explosions generally hurt everybody around.

But if you're big enough, grown up enough, to know how to forgive, even to love those who have wronged you, that grounds the explosives within you so that nobody gets hurt. You can go on your way without a blow-up that wrecks you as well as the other fellow.

Gas trucks have to have chains dragging behind to prevent explosions but people have to carry love and good will in their hearts.

The Peerless Christ

A Communion Sermon
By ROLAND E. TURNBULL

SOMEONE has said, "A great man condemns his generation to the task of explaining him." The generation which produced Jesus had some very conflicting explanations. Some said that he had a devil; some that he was a friend of sinners; others that he was the Son of God. Now, though twenty centuries have passed, men still try to explain him.

You have heard it said: "Every man has a right to trial by a jury of his peers." But when we think of Jesus we are unable to draw a jury for we find that he has no equal. Let us see how true this is in some of the areas of his life.

For example, Jesus had no sense of dependence on others. While not denying human friendship, he was not dependent upon it. He did not cling, as we do, gratefully, to our family and friends. Did he not say, when told that his mother and brothers were seeking him, "Who is my mother and my brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister and mother."

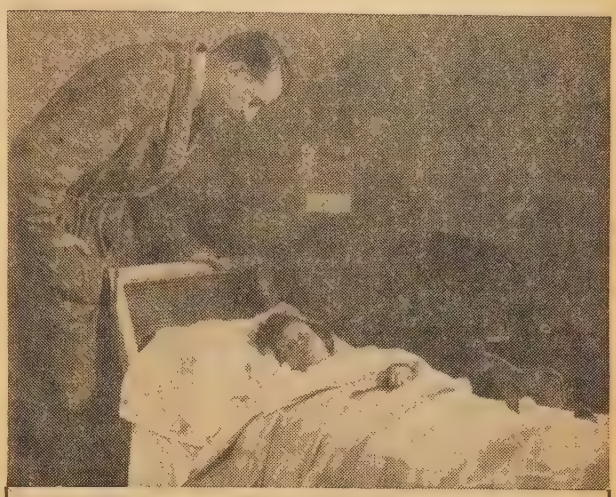
HE STOOD ALONE

When he turned toward Calvary, all forsook him and fled. In the time of greatest testing he was without a friendly face to give courage, yet he showed no sign of weakness.

He was not dependent on others for knowledge, as were the teachers of his day. "He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes." Jesus spoke *by* authority. He is without peer. He was not dependent on others.

Again, Jesus had no experience of defilement by sin. Most men admit to evil thoughts, dark passions in the heart restrained only by convention, environment and training. Paul considered himself "the chief of sinners" and John Bunyan left a book: *Grace Abounding to that Chief of Sinners, John Bunyan.*

But compare Jesus. He stood among his contemporaries, the Pharisees—who sought flaws in his character—and challenged them: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" They tried but, except for his disregard



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of the ceremonial law in which he has the support of every intelligent man, no man ever kept the spirit of the law better than he. Here is one who had no sense of shame, no remorse, one alien to the emotion of penitence. He is without peer for he had no sense of the defilement of sin.

Again, Jesus had no experience of distance from God. One of the things most evident in men's hearts is the yearning for God, though that yearning is not always recognized for what it is. Jesus felt no yearning for God because he did not feel distant from God. Notice that he distinguished between his special relationship and our own when he told his disciples: "When ye pray, say, Our Father . . ." In his own prayers it was always, "My Father."

Perhaps the most startling and difficult assertion which Jesus made was this: "I and my Father are one," or "Who hath seen me hath seen the Father." How many theologians have struggled to interpret this mystery which only means that Jesus was without a peer—he had no sense of distance from God.

JESUS IS DIFFERENT

To judge Jesus by a jury of his peers is impossible. The more we try to judge him by human standards the more he stands apart.

Dr. Norwood, late of City Temple, London, tells of talking with a young corporal in Belgium during World War I. The soldier had planned to enter the ministry but he had given up the idea because of scepticism regarding the virgin birth, miracles and the resurrection. "What do you think of Jesus," Dr. Norwood asked. "A wonderful man, but no divinity stuff," was the answer. "With whom else would you compare him?" "Oh, with Emerson, Shakespeare or Carlyle." "Have you ever noticed the difference," asked the clergyman, "in the quality of their influence and that of Jesus?" The soldier asked what he meant. "When you think of Jesus do you ever find yourself wishing you were a better man?" The answer was "Yes." "Do you remember ever feeling that way about the other three?" The soldier replied that he did not think so.

Many other questions and answers followed. Finally the young man told of an experience in the front line. A wounded German lay outside his trench in no-man's land. Moved by sympathy, he crawled over the parapet at great risk to himself and gave the wounded man a drink of water. Throughout the night the German thanked him across the intervening space until his voice petered out and he was gone.

"Corporal," asked Dr. Norwood, "who influenced you to do that? Shakespeare, Emerson or Carlyle?" "I guess it was Jesus," came the answer. "I see what you mean. He *is* different. He stands alone."

Let us come to the table and remember him who is without peer.

EVERY DAY I begin my work with the same old feeling, that I am on trial for my life and shall probably not be acquitted.

VAN WYCK BROOKS.

Crucifixion

Mary's Thoughts on Good Friday

By MILLARD M. GIFFORD

Crucifixion is the realization that one is to bear a son, with the conviction that pious people are going to point their fingers at you and wag their heads knowingly.

Crucifixion is pondering all the things your God-sent Son remarks about and holding them close to your heart, so close that the vitality of them scorches and burns.

Crucifixion is listening to a soul of pure alabaster sharing his wisdom with the masses, many of whom can understand neither his message, nor his motives.

Crucifixion is beholding a son leave his fireside and the loving father who had taught him his trade, in order that he may become a prophet, without honor in his own country.

Crucifixion is anticipating events that must surely happen: conniving behind the scenes, political and religious hatred, sudden seizure by the Romans and his brethren.

Crucifixion is encountering the events anticipated, standing by helplessly, as bestial men hammer nails into the loveliest body that ever trod the rugged roads of Palestine.

Crucifixion is seeing eyes glaze, eyes which have pierced to the heart of man's evil for salvation's sake, noting blood ooze from nailprints, watching soldiers gamble for a seamless robe.

Crucifixion is the unfulfilled longing to talk with one who understands your thoughts, whose mind soars and whose conversation, like your own, is with a just and holy God.

Crucifixion is the constant yearning to feel the touch of a hand, now lifeless, to see the light of appreciation and esteem dancing in eyes kissed by the dew of heaven.

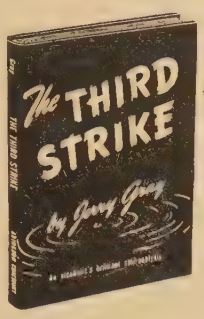
Crucifixion is separation, an all-gone feeling, silence, shame, disgrace, the strange emptiness of a heart once filled to overflowing,—the dead ashes of a once crackling fire.

Crucifixion is seeing goodness stopped by evil, justice thwarted by injustice, purity flung aside by depraved men, God being silent at the monstrous insult, friends scattered to the winds of heaven.

Crucifixion is wanting to die, praying for earth to swallow you up, then being unable to perish, compelled to go back to the old routine, bringing solace to heart broken lives, one's heart being broken.

WE SOMETIMES say that "money talks." To be sure, it does. Get to know two things about a man—how he earns his money and how he spends it—and you have the clue to his character, for you have a searchlight that shows up the inmost recesses of his soul. You know all you need to know about his standards, his motives, his driving desires, his real religion.

ROBERT J. MCCRACKEN.



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The Local Church Paper

By GARY BOUSMAN

A FEW days ago I stopped in front of one of the literature tables in the office of our local council of churches. On this table were no less than sixteen newspapers and news sheets published by churches in Buffalo. Perhaps there are others that have not reached the council office.

If this situation is repeated all over the country, there must be thousands of local church papers printed every month. Evidently many clergymen have discovered that the Sunday bulletin does not cover all the news.

In these times no clergyman can afford to neglect the public relations department of his church. He may be up to his neck in work, but his work will be of limited value unless people hear about it. There are many ways to publicize a church program but as one minister said, "there is nothing to take the place of a church newspaper."

● *A Church Paper Does Two Things*

A church paper does two things in general: It informs and it reminds. These are two of the biggest jobs in the publicity department of any church. People need to be informed of what is going on, but more than that, they must know *why* it is going on. Prejudice against missions and other phases of the church program can be broken down if people know the facts. The more you know about a subject the more interest you have in it.

A local church paper lies before me. An entire column in this issue explains the flower arrangement in the sanctuary. Surely there must have been at least a few who paid special attention to the flowers after reading that item. Who knows, perhaps some otherwise late sleeper got up in time to come to church to see them.

Not only does the church paper inform, it also serves as a reminder. Advertisers work on the principle that customers must be continually reminded of the product. Church members need nudging too.

Unless the Sunday bulletin is mailed out, announcements concerning church functions will reach mostly those who attend services. But the parishioner who did not get to church needs the reminder just as much, if not more.

No one can measure the value of the church paper when it comes to recruiting members. Our paper goes out to a great many people who are not members. As soon as a potential member comes into view his name is added to our mailing list.

Usually new members start receiving the paper before they join the church. But even after they have joined, there is the job of orienting them into the total life of the church. In this respect the paper serves as a medium.

Much more could be said concerning the importance of church papers. But what I have to say is not an attempt to convince anyone of the value of such publications. What concerns most clergymen is not *why* but *how* to publish a paper.

Judging from the papers that I have examined, there is no set rule as to size, manner of printing, or frequency of publication. Of the twenty papers lying before me, six are mimeographed, nine are printed, one is printed on multigraph and one with multilith. Most of the mimeographed papers are weekly publications. With two exceptions the printed papers are monthlies.

GARY BOUSMAN

● *Be Guided by Your Needs*

What methods of printing are used should be determined by the needs of the church and its resources. A printed paper is usually neater than a paper produced on a duplicating machine. It need not necessarily be a financial burden on the church. Most printed papers are financed by subscription and advertisers. A few refuse advertising and are financed by donation, subscription and an allotment from the church budget.

Even the paper financed entirely from church funds should not be considered a burden on the church treasury. Favorable public opinion generated by such a paper may add unmeasurably to the strength of the church. It is like bread cast upon the waters.

Though the printed paper presents the best "front," the mimeographed sheet still has advantages. It is especially recommended where publication is weekly or semi-monthly and where the circulation is less than five hundred. One of the chief advantages to mimeographing is the fact that the time between the final editing and the actual printing can be a matter of minutes, or at the most, an hour. This is helpful when you are trying to meet the deadline.

● *No Advertising Is Needed*

Another advantage to the paper produced on the office duplicating machine is the fact that the editor, usually the minister, does not have to worry about advertising. The cost of producing such a paper is so small that advertising is not necessary.

While photographs cannot be reproduced on the mimeograph machine, line drawings can be cut into the stencil. One does not have to be an artist to produce attractive illustrations. Both the A. B. Dick Company and the Speed-O-Print Company have prepared packages of drawings that may be used for tracing on the stencil. New drawings are coming out periodically.

The A. B. Dick Company also has professionally prepared illustrations called "mimeograph inserts." They may be inserted into the stencil and are better in quality than the average stencil drawing.

The multigraph machine produces a neat copy and one that can hardly be distinguished from job printing. However, the multigraph uses type which has to be set by hand. This requires more time than most ministers or secretaries can give.

Another office duplicator manufactured by the Addressograph-Multigraph Corporation is called the multilith. It works on the same principle as off-set lithographing. This machine sells for more than five hundred dollars but if the secretary, janitor or some layman is willing to spend a little time operating it, it will meet all the printing needs of the church.

At a small cost photographic metal plates can be prepared and from these writing paper, posters, bulletin covers, statements and other stationery needs of the church can be printed in the

church office. Except to the professional printer or to the advertising man, the work done on this machine with the photographic plate can hardly be distinguished from that done on the job press.

The multilith is a valuable machine for publishing a church paper if the church has someone who is willing to learn a few simple tricks concerning its operation. Illustrations can be drawn on the master sheet with pencil and are superior to those cut on the mimeograph stencil. The master sheet will fit into most typewriters and the cost of printing a typewritten page is about eight cents. If you happen to have access to a typewriter that has gothic or similar type, the results will look much like a printed page.

There are also several duplicating machines that operate with gelatine and liquid. They do their best work in purple and print clear copy only for a limited run. They have a special function in business offices but are not generally used in churches.

Many ministers are taking advantage of the material available by denominational publishing houses. A good example is the weekly sheet published by the Congregational Christian Churches. On one side of an 8½" by 11" sheet are pictures and news items that are of general interest to church members. The printed matter is arranged so that the sheet may be folded making two 5½" by 8½" pages. The local church uses the blank side of the paper on which to print its own news.

● *Professional Help Is Available*

The National Religious Press in Grand Rapids, Michigan, specializes in printing church papers. They furnish beautiful lithographed picture covers and are able to provide syndicated pages. Since this material is used by hundreds of churches, the local church does not have to pay a prohibitive price. Ninety per cent of their customers publish monthly magazines.

Most of the work of getting out a church paper falls on the minister. If he has a secretary, she can take care of the details. A few churches have lay editors but conversations with pastors in some of these churches reveals the fact that the minister still gets a lion's share of the responsibility.

This does not eliminate the use of lay reporters. In fact, a sure way to get people into the habit of reading the church paper is to let them help write it. If a church has a paper of more than one page, it seems wise that there should be reporters from the various organizations. The reporters should have the privilege of seeing their names in the by-line. Certainly if the paper uses advertising, there should be a layman appointed as business manager. Most ministers do not have time to be trotting around selling advertising.

How often the paper should be printed ought to be determined by the editor. But whether it is published weekly or monthly, it is well to establish a schedule and stick to it. Meeting a deadline is not as easy as getting out the paper according to whim. As a rule, however, the paper published only when the minister is not too busy with other matters simply is not published.

● *An Addressing Machine Helps*

A few final words ought to be said about mailing. An addressing machine, if it works, is worth its price. For a large church it is almost indispensable. Many business firms are now putting in new machines and are throwing considerable second-hand equipment on the market. If you need one of these machines, why not ask your trustees to keep an eye out for one.

Postage does not necessarily have to be an expensive item. Two or three pages of second class mail goes for two cents. For ten dollars the church can purchase a mailing permit that makes it possible to mail individual pieces up to 1⅛ ounces for one cent each, provided that there are at least two hundred pieces in each mailing. Another permit makes it possible to send out magazines, the cost of which is determined by the weight of the entire bundle. This method is so cheap that an entire mailing of a small paper generally costs less than a dollar.

One does not have to be a graduate in journalism to be the editor of a successful church paper—though many ministers show remarkable skill in that field. A good writing style will help, but style is not the last word. A few short and snappy sentences telling *what, when, where* and lots of *whos* will be read.

Sermon Illustrations

Chosen from Recent Religious Books

A Sense of Values

JUST as the artist withdraws a distance from his easel from time to time to see the detail he is working on in the perspective of the whole, so we must have frequent times of withdrawal from the details of life to evaluate them in terms of our main purpose, else life gets completely out of balance and our picture of it doesn't make sense.

The story is told about some boys who wanted to play a Hallowe'en prank. They contrived to get into a department store at night and had a wonderful time changing the price tags on articles. A five-hundred-dollar tag from a fur coat was put on a child's rubber ball, the ten-cent tag from the ball on the fur coat, and so on through the store. The next morning consternation reigned! The management had to close the store until they could get the price tags straightened out. They couldn't do profitable business with the tags as the boys had left them.

Thousands of people in these days have a five-hundred-dollar tag on their own hectic activity and a ten-cent tag on God. And they cannot do the business of life with spiritual profit that way. Those tags do not represent real values. The lives of the people are all out of balance. They will have to get their values straight if life is to have real meaning for them.—*The Adventure of Prayer,* by Bishop Donald J. Campbell, Abingdon-Cokesbury.

Proof Positive

AN OLD saint, who had marked the great promises of the Bible with the letters "T" and "P," was asked the meaning of his script. Smilingly he replied, "Tried and proved." As simple as this sounds, it refers to timeless truth. God's foundation has stood the test of centuries. It is not shaken by the earthquakes of today.—*The Hour Has Come,* by G. Ray Jordan, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press.

The Word of a Master

SUPPOSE we are standing in the presence of Leonardo da Vinci, looking at a beautiful painting. With his discerning eye and artistic understanding, da Vinci is pointing out certain flaws in the painting. He says: "Yes, it is a very fine picture. However, there is a tint that is a bit too strong. Here one of the lines is not as accurate as it should be. The shadows are too deep there." Startled, you turn and ask a friend, "How does he know?" Your comrade answers, "Know? Surely if anybody knows, it is Leonardo da Vinci!" Or we listen to some stirring musical program. Beside us sits Mozart. When the music is finished, Mozart says: "It was done well, but the full beauty of the number was not played out. The tempo was not precisely correct. The andante was played a bit too rapidly." You turn and ask how he knows. "Why should he comment on such

artistry?" The answer is the same: "If anyone has a right to talk about music . . . surely it is Mozart!" So it is with Christ—in a more pronounced way. He is the Master of all life. Nothing human or divine is foreign to him.—*The Hour Has Come,* by G. Ray Jordan, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press.

Waiting for Results

I WELL remember planting my first vegetable garden when I was a lad. My brother and I had carefully dug and raked the small plot of ground. Then we bought seeds and planted them. But could we wait for the natural process of growth? No indeed. Like most children of that age we dug up the seeds to see if they were really growing, thus destroying their chance for growth. Only in maturity did we learn the patience to let the slow process of growth take its course.

In prayer we are sowing seeds in the garden of eternity, and if the results do not appear right away, let us have the spiritual maturity to await God's good time. A whole lifetime is not too long when we realize that the seeds of prayer are not planted for a short season but for keeps, for eternity. We cannot hurry growth. We can afford to be patient and wait.—*The Adventure of Prayer,* by Bishop Donald J. Campbell, Abingdon-Cokesbury.

Did You Preach with Tenderness?

ANDREW BONAR and Robert M'Cheyne were having one of their frequent walks together, talking over the ways of their ministry. "M'Chyene asked me," said Bonar, "what my last Sabbath's subject had been. It had been: 'the wicked shall be turned into hell.' On hearing this awful text, he asked: 'Were you able to preach it with tenderness?'" And that is the heart of the difficulty. To know of God's justice and hatred of evil and to account for his willingness, yes, his eagerness, to remove our guilt, "as far as the east is from the west," is beyond our power adequately to express.—*Have This Mind,* by Bishop Gerald Kennedy, Harper & Brothers.

Safe at Last

MANY of us are like Mr. Timms, whom St. John Ervine vividly describes in one of his plays. Though this clerk in one of the larger London offices is lonely, he has never cultivated the capacity for making friends. . . . He even restrains his affections, refusing to care for any woman. . . . Whenever he has some slight inclination to fulfill certain social obligations, a voice says: "Before you do this . . . be very careful, old man. Suppose you should lose your job tomorrow. What would become of you?" His fear is so great it becomes a phobia. . . .

Then one day what Mr. Timms has feared actually occurs. He is dismissed by the London firm; he loses his job. It is the breaking point. He becomes seriously ill. The doctor who is summoned hesitatingly informs his patient that he has only a few weeks to live. The physician is startled when Mr. Timms looks up into his face and whispers, "Oh, doctor, thank you! Thank God I'm safe at last!"

But was he really safe? Had he found security? Is it better to play safe in a world made for heroes? Which is better: to lose your life in the service of Christ, trying to save the world, or to save your life but lose your own soul? What did Jesus think? What is the verdict of the centuries?—*The Hour Has Come,* by G. Ray Jordan, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press.

My Elder Brother Knows

I HAVE an old friend who stops by now and again to talk for a few moments about his Christian experiences. No one could claim that he is the most gifted man in the world. He has very little education, and when it comes to worldly wisdom he is almost naïve. But the one thing that impresses me most about him is his quiet assumption that he belongs to a fellowship that is like a great family. Often he will say, in discussing something that seems mysterious: "I do not know the answer to that but my Elder Brother knows." In this fine old Christian's heart there is never a trace of envy for those who may possess a social standing far above him. He has a background. The Christian belongs to the greatest family in the world, for his brother is Christ, and his father is God.—*Have This Mind,* by Bishop Gerald Kennedy, Harper & Brothers.

A Family Resemblance

THE statement in the Bible that God made man in his own image has called forth much ridicule of religion by its naïvely literal-minded opponents. These point out that it is ridiculous to believe that a man looks like God, or God like a man. And to this most of us would heartily agree. But what an unnecessarily narrow interpretation of "made in the image of" this is. May it not refer to spiritual likeness rather than physical likeness, thus meaning that it is possible for men to have a spiritual affinity or relationship with God?

Certainly on the familiar human level one can make this distinction. A son may not look like his father at all, yet be very close to him spiritually. On the other hand, another son who is the "spittin' image" of his dad may be poles removed from him in spiritual qualites. Now which of the two sons is made in the image of his father? The familiar phrase, "he is a true son of his father," refers more often to spiritual qualities than to physical likeness.—*The Adventure of Prayer,* by Bishop Donald J. Campbell, Abingdon-Cokesbury.

Standing on a Star

ONE night on a mountain I was looking at the stars. How vast and solid seemed the earth beneath me! How far away and tiny those glittering points of light! My imagination vainly beat its wings against infinity. I remembered the light-years by which astronomers measure the gulfs of space. I recalled the unbelievable magnitudes of Algol and Betelgeuse. Then as I thought I stood on a solid world looking at the stars of heaven, I was startled by the memory that I too was standing on a star, not a great primary star either, but a little planetary one, moving around a lesser sun. Yes, I looked at the stars, but I too lived on a star. I was afloat in the great spaces, citizen of the skies. Then I remembered the words, "In my father's house are many mansions." I had always looked up to a heaven beyond death through the telescope of those words. They describe the heavenly home.—*The Bridge,* by Arthur Wentworth Hewitt, Abingdon-Cokesbury.

Cooperative Effort

THE story is told of a salesman who, on his regular route, frequently passed a corner lot just outside a small Vermont village. The lot was untidy and unkept, full of weeds, not a very pleasant sight. One year, however, the salesman was amazed to find the ugly lot transformed into a beautiful flower garden. He was so pleased that he was moved to stop his car, and being a religious fellow he accosted the old Vermont farmer who was working in the garden thus: "My good man, isn't it wonderful what God and man working together can do?"

"Yep, yep, maybe so," said the farmer, "but you remember what a mess this place was when God had it alone."

Some might think this story borders on the sacrilegious, but it does not at all. Truth cannot be sacrilegious, and the story tells the truth about life—that it is not God alone but God and man working together, creating together—that makes a garden spot of a life that otherwise would be pretty much of a mess.—*The Adventure of Prayer,* by Bishop Donald J. Campbell, Abingdon-Cokesbury.

Thoughts from Unpublished Sermons

FROM James H. Laird of Wesley Methodist Church, Amherst, Mass., comes a sermon which takes its text not from the Bible but from the apocryphal Traditions of Matthias: "Wonder at the things before you." Certainly these words which the book ascribes to Jesus are in harmony with his spirit, he asserts. What is more the wonder they encourage is a genuine note in true religion. Remember Moses and his burning bush that was not consumed or Elijah, in the wilderness, awed by the earthquake and the fire in the wake of which he heard his still, small voice. Remember Isaiah who, when he thought of the Messiah, wrote: "His name shall be Wonderful." Surely this sense of wonder is what is implied in another saying of Jesus: "Except ye become as little children . . ."

The Quality of Wonder

"Many of us have forgotten how to wonder," says the author of this sermon, and that is the source of much of our difficulty today. "Emerson observed that if the stars came out only once in a century people would rush from their houses to see them. But as it is they come out almost every night and they become an old story." Thus with all things which are familiar—we cease being awed by them. It is not so with a child. "Everything for him is new and wonderful. He is seeing the beauty of the world and the variety of God's creation with fresh eyes . . . and he views all with wonder."

Dangers in Sophistication

"Another factor militating against wonder in our day is the sophistication which is so much in fashion. It is not stylish to be impressed in our day. . . . To show enthusiasm and wonder is to betray a childishness that is beneath a mature person. . . . Yet in turning our backs on the simplicity of the child in his wonder at life we turn away from some of the deepest experiences of life."

"How ignorant we are," he says, and how foolish in our sophistication!" If we will only keep this in mind we will recapture our sense of wonder. Thought is the key to wonder. If we stop to think about these things we shall start to wonder at the greatness of God's creation and his goodness to us. For, though we have tried to wring the mystery out of our religion, we cannot do it. Though we have tried to reduce God to our size, we have had no success. Though we have tried to fool ourselves into believing we have explained the wonder out of life, we have not done so.

"I pray that something of the beauty of God's creation, something of the holiness of the Eternal, something of the greatness and the power and the majesty of God shall possess us and cause us to "Wonder at the things before us."

Coming Appointments

A SERMON by Russell Shaw, minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Chariton, Iowa is most timely. It is called "Post-Easter Appointments," and takes as its text Matthew 28:16.

The author begins by calling attention to the custom in some churches of referring to the Sunday after Easter as "low Sunday," obviously in reference to the let-down which follows the climactic Sunday of the church year. But, he points out, for the disciples the Sunday after the resurrection was anything but "low." It was for them "a time devoted to the keeping of appointments."

The first of these appointments was with Jesus himself at the mountain in Galilee to which he had directed them. The second was with each other for in their disillusion over the crucifixion they had become separated. Peter had gone fishing, Thomas also had gone away. But the resurrection brought them back together and re-united them with Jesus. Then, there was a third appointment according to this preacher—an appointment with the world made by the giving of the great commission.

These same appointments must be made and kept by us if our enthusiasm of Easter Sunday is to mean anything to us. Otherwise all that Easter means to us will melt into thin air like Prospero's magic.

We say we believe that Jesus is alive. Then we had better keep our appointment with him through prayer. We had better keep it also through the study of the Scriptures. We must keep it in worship through the year.

In the keeping of the second appointment—that with each other—the Christian Church was born. "All that believed were together." Although it is true that the spirit of Jesus is greater than the pages of the New Testament or that God is not confined to the four walls of the church, the fact still remains that God is more often found in church than anywhere else. When we keep this second appointment—with those others who believe—the essential values of the resurrection for us are preserved.

Nor can we ignore the third appointment—that of the disciples with the un-Christianized world. Every person who joins the church promises to give his whole heart to the service of Christ and his kingdom throughout the world.

Soul Starvation

FROM George Lawrence Parker, recently retired pastor of the First Parish (Congregational-Unitarian) of Duxbury, Mass., comes a manuscript which bears the unique title, "The Gentle Art of Starving the Soul." "This must be a gentle art indeed," he begins his sermon, "for it is practiced by countless hosts of people."

Dr. Parker tells of an incident, all too familiar to most ministers, of a man who came into his study to declare that to him nothing meant anything any more. The minister asked him what church he attended. He answered that he went nowhere to church. Then he asked him what he read. The answer was that he had no time to read. "What, then, is your religion?" was the third question. "My religion," came the answer, "is just to do the best I can, be decent and honest and let everything else take care of itself."

This man, says Dr. Parker, was starving himself to death spiritually. He was a victim of self-imposed spiritual famine. "What does all our bother and argument of today mean but just this? This man in my study represents masses of humanity both in the United States and all over the world. 'Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which satisfieth not,' asked Isaiah more than 2600 years ago."

"Can we do anything about it?" this preacher asks. Not if we rely only on patches of cure, slogans, schemes and the like. "Nothing will save us but a new mind-set, a revolution in the culture of the inner spirit of mankind. Every person who thinks thoroughly, feels deeply, practices love, kindness, prayer, seeks ultimate values, refuses to be fooled and never surrenders, will help to make up the saving remnant of which the prophets spoke. They will be the saviours of society.

Each man must make his own rules. God's only commandment is to know that you are hungry—then eat. Take these things seriously, live by them, get to know the difference between a sunset and a movie screen, learn to love humanity and strive to behold the heavenly Father—these things are rules enough. But in the name of starvation—Eat! G. H. B.

This page of the Pulpit is devoted to the review of some of the many fine sermons submitted for publication in the Pulpit which cannot be printed in full for lack of space. They are presented here in extract form in the hope that the fine material they contain will serve as inspiration for Pulpit readers.

The Epistles of St. Paul and the Parish Paper Toda

The Surest Method of Getting Your Message "Home" to Every Member of Your Congregation

From the very beginning of Christianity the early Fathers realized that they must make use of every help available to spread the message of their beloved Master. While filled with ardor, they were but a mere handful of men and could not hope to visit all the cities of the world and preach the Gospel.

Saint Paul did much to solve their problem by writing his Epistles to the various congregations. These letters were copied and sent to other churches—they were read again and again.

While the pastor of today does not have to cover so much territory, he is beset with other difficulties. He must carry on the business management of his church, cheer the sick, call on members and prospective members, and take part in all social and spiritual activities.

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